

## Feedback from ex-patients of the National Institute of Mental Health

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### Why a feedback from ex-patients is important?

- It is an important way of learning how to improve services
- to provide inputs for planning services
- to provide information for training of professionals in the mental health field

# Study Design & Methodology

- A qualitative study of understanding interactions between patients and hospital staff, and the hospital environment
- Personal interviews with 24 selected ex-patients and their care givers
- 9 others refused to be interviewed and 3 were judged to be too disturbed for interview

## Client selection criteria

- Discharged from the hospital during January – August 2009
- Living within the Colombo district
- Age below 65 years
- Excluding clients with learning disabilities ('mental retardation') acutely disturbed when visited and patients on leave from the hospital

## Eliciting views and perceptions of ex-clients on hospital experience

- **How different professional staff related to the clients and to what extent they were helpful or not**
- **What situations / staff in the hospital were helpful or upsetting to them**
- **What happened when a patients became violent or aggressive**

## Eliciting views and perceptions of treatment etc.

- **What they thought about medication and other treatments**
- **Whether they could have being helped without going to hospital**
- **Facilities in hospital, including food, sleeping arrangements**

## Eliciting views and perceptions of care givers on hospitalization

- Views about visiting arrangements and facilities provided by hospital
- What benefits or problems had resulted from hospitalization

## Ex-patients interviewed

- Age: 10 over 50; 14 under 50
- Gender: 14 men and 10 men
- Education: Grade 6+=19; Grade 5- =5
- Marital status:10 single, 5 married, 9 div / sep / widow
- Employment (m/f): 14 (6/8) Unemp; 6 (6/0) employed
- Economic status: poor / very poor=18; middle=6
- Illness diagnosis: Schizophrenia/psychosis=12;bipolar / depression=8; epilepsy/subs-abuse=4
- Current living status: Alone=3; with parents=9; with spouse =4; with children or relatives=8

## Patients admitted without consent believed that

- there was no reason for them to get admitted to a hospital
- they could have recovered by staying at home if home-care and / or attitudes of family members were better
- they could have got treatment from a private hospital/doctor (preferred by patients from middle/upper middle income families)

Patients admitted with consent believed that hospitalization  
was the best way to recover because

- they were compelled to take medicine which they neglected/refused to take at home
- they were able to identify the illness they had
- hospital provided them expensive treatment/medicine which they cannot afford to have (particularly for patients from poor families)
- they were able to recover from their illnesses and other bad behaviours such as alcoholism and smoking

# Perceptions on hospital facilities

- Wards are generally kept clean
- Bed linen is regularly changed, but some complained of unclean beds.
- Bathing facilities and water in the toilets were sufficient.
- Some clients complained of lack of cleanliness in the toilets, lack of doors in the toilets and inadequate number of water buckets.
- Food was seen as generally good (especially by patients from low income families); some found it lacked taste and salt; generally seen as good enough from a government hospital provided free of charge.
- Some families (particularly those from the upper income groups) made arrangements with the hospital canteen to provide meals/brought from home for their patients

## Other comments on hospital experience - 1

- Hospital court yard is a good place for recreation etc. and admired by many clients.
- Many clients enjoyed playing volleyball, carom, watching TV and reading newspapers.
- Telephone messages from family members were communicated to patients or else they were allowed to speak to their family members

## Other comments on hospital experience - 2

- OT was disliked by some clients; others did not mention OT
- Some appreciated help of PSWs
- Some liked horticulture

## Perceptions of hospital staff -1

### **Nurses**

- Nurses are kind, talk to patients, and ensure that patients take their medicine
- Student nurses in particular talk with patients about their personal problems and give advice. Sometimes they brought clothes and food from their homes for patients.

## Perceptions of hospital staff -2

### Attendants

- Some attendants are kind and helpful
- Some attendants are not helpful
- Sometimes they physically intimidate them
- Some patients are favoured by attendants (clients prefer all patients to be treated equally)

## Perceptions of hospital staff -3

### Doctors

- Some clients blamed the doctors for listening too much to family members and not enough to patient's own version of events before admission
- Some clients blamed doctors for not visiting them often but others said they appreciated doctors spending long hours discussing problems with them and their family members.
- Some doctors intervened in resolving family disputes and harmonizing family relationships